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By Congressman Charles F. Bass
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When looking for the industry that supports a high number of American jobs with a huge economic impact, you need to look no further than your own back yard.

According to a recently released, nationwide study by the Outdoor Industry Association (available at www.outdoorindustry.org), the premier trade association for companies in the active outdoor recreation business, outdoor recreation was responsible for 6.1 million direct jobs; more than the construction, oil and gas and the finance and insurance industries. And, with direct spending totaling more than \$646 billion annually, Americans spend significantly more on outdoor recreation than they do on pharmaceuticals, gasoline and fuels, and household utilities. It's clear that outdoor recreation plays an important role in the daily lives and lifestyles of Americans.

In New Hampshire, the outdoor recreation industry, which encompasses every activity from hiking to hunting to fishing, boating to snowmobiling, and skiing to biking, has one of the highest direct and indirect impacts on our economy. In our state alone, we are home to the headquarters of leading outdoor retailers, manufacturers of skis and ski boots, makers of outdoor supply gear, and builders of firearms used for hunting. Not only do we utilize the products that these companies make, but residents work in their stores and their factories earning a living and supporting their families and communities.

In addition, outdoor recreation creates jobs at the marinas around our lakes, at the ski areas, at the hunting lodges, at the ATV parks, and so many other places throughout our state. Just think about how much our economy is based on the outdoors. In real numbers, last year the outdoor recreation industry alone supported 53,000 jobs across New Hampshire and generated \$261 million in annual state tax revenue. And these figures don't even include the jobs created in the tourism and forest products industries, which employ thousands more.

I am proud to represent a state that has a long heritage of supporting outdoor recreation and recognizes that the environment and our economy go hand-in-hand. State leadership saw the value of preserving our lands for recreational use and was responsible for investing in and building some of the first ski resorts across the state like Cannon Mountain and Mount Sunapee, allowing vast access to all-terrain vehicles, such as on the trails at Jericho Mountain State Park in Berlin and ensuring hunting areas remain open and robust.

Outdoor recreation is a multi-dimensional and critical sector of the American economy, often more so than people realize, with ripple effects totaling roughly \$1.6 trillion in economic impact and 12 million jobs.

With positive economic benefits like these, it's important to preserve our state's natural resources for generations to come, and that's why I have long supported programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Community Forest Program to conserve our

open spaces and, ultimately, boost our economy.

Conservation isn't a partisan issue, nor should it be. During the appropriations process, more than 150 Republican and Democratic Members of Congress from across the country joined me in urging the House Appropriations Committee to stress the importance of these programs to our environment and our economy. We all agree that preserving open spaces and our natural resources for future generations must be done and can be done in a fiscally-responsible manner.

As we saw last week with record numbers of visitors to the Granite State during the Fourth of July holiday, New Hampshire is a popular destination for families and individuals looking to relax and enjoy the natural treasures that our state has to offer. Let's keep it that way by supporting conservation programs that protect our environment and our economy.